



All 3 Springfield casino proposals carry price tags of \$800 million-plus

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By

SPRINGFIELD — With the **deadline for Springfield casino proposals** now past, the city's chief development officer said Friday the city is fortunate to have three top-caliber companies competing for a lone license – all offering projects in the \$800 million to \$900 million range.

"It's a wonderful cross-section of companies and locations," said Kevin E. Kennedy, chief development officer. "We have some of the best casino companies in America, and they have targeted three very interesting, unique sites in Springfield."

MGM Resorts International, Penn National and Ameristar Casinos submitted their qualifications and conceptual plans by Thursday's deadline, setting the stage for a three-way, high-stakes competition for a Springfield casino license. Under state law, three casinos will be allowed in Massachusetts including one designated in Western Massachusetts, needing local and state approval.

Besides the three casinos proposed in Springfield, the owner of Mohegan Sun in Connecticut is proposing a casino in Palmer off the Massachusetts Turnpike and other casino proposals are possible.

Kennedy said that a five-member review committee of which he is a member will evaluate

The logo for Ameristar, featuring the word "AMERISTAR" in a large, red, serif font.



Company information

MGM Resorts

Headquarters: Las Vegas, Nev.

Number of casinos in operation: 23

CEO: Jim Murren

Most recent casino project: CityCenter on the south side of the Las Vegas strip

Annual revenue: \$7.8 billion

Number of employees: 50,700

Penn National Gaming

Headquarters: Wyomissing, Pa.

CEO: Peter M. Carlino

Number of casinos in operation: 21

Most recent casino project: Hollywood Casino in St. Louis, under construction

Annual revenue: \$2.7 billion

Number of employees: 16,740

the proposals beginning next week, The documents should be available for public view on the city's casino website by mid-week at: www.springfield-ma.gov/casino, he said.

MGM and Penn National have already publicized their competing detailed casino plans in the South End and North End, respectively.

MGM in August announced an \$800 million casino plan in the South End, covering three blocks bordered by State Street to the north, Union Street to the south and by Main Street and Columbus Avenue on the east and west.

Penn National on Thursday officially unveiled its plans for an \$807 million casino resort and entertainment complex in the North End of the downtown. The plans include the purchase and relocation of The Republican building and Peter Pan building on Main Street and various other properties.

Ameristar, which was the first company to propose a casino in Springfield at the former Westinghouse property in East Springfield, gave more details Friday, describing a \$910 million project with a casino, hotel, retail and restaurant facilities and two parking garages. Ameristar purchased the cleared 41-acre site on Page Boulevard for \$16 million in January.

In the newly released details, Ameristar said its casino resort spa complex will feature "contemporary decor" that includes a 150,000-square-foot state-of-the-art casino with approximately 3,300 slot machines and 110 table games including poker. In addition, there will be a 500-room luxury hotel including 50 suites. The property will feature multiple swimming pools, a full-service spa and retail venues and a diverse offering of dining venues, Ameristar said.

There will be 18,000 square feet of entertainment and meetings space, and two multi-level parking garages with a capacity for approximately 4,300 vehicles.

Troy A. Strumming, a senior vice-president with Ameristar, said the casino project is unique from the others because the property is large enough to permit future expansion, has easy access, would not place additional pressure on local traffic, and would be "shovel ready" sooner than the others.

Ameristar will be publicizing its artist renderings in the near future, a spokeswoman said.

The review committee will evaluate the Phase 1 proposals and decide by Oct. 31, which companies are pre-qualified and invited to submit final plans, Kennedy said.

The uniqueness of each proposal includes: MGM's project would be in a neighborhood that was severely damaged in the tornado of June 1, 2011; Penn National's proposal would tie in to hopes for further redevelopment along the Connecticut River; and Ameristar offers an opportunity in the eastern part of the city that boasts convenience and accessibility, Kennedy said. The stiff competition behooves a better project benefiting the city and state, he said.

Ameristar

Headquarters: Las Vegas, Nev. 89169

CEO: Gordon R. Kanofsky

Number of casinos in operation: 8

Most recent casino project: Purchase of Creative Casinos of Louisiana

Annual revenue: Over \$1 billion

Number of employees: 7,210

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno will negotiate "community host agreements" with one or more companies, which would also need approval from the City Council, officials said. A special election could take place as early as June to determine if voters support a casino proposal or proposals, Kennedy said.

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